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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

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TAGS: PREL PGOV KWBG IS PTER

SUBJECT: MIXED ASSESSMENTS ON ABBAS' CALL FOR "NATIONAL DIALOGUE"

REF: JERUSALEM 946

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. President Abbas' office announced on June 5 the formation of a committee composed of PLO Executive Committee members to prepare for "comprehensive national dialogue with Hamas to implement the Yemeni Initiative." Fatah PLC bloc leader Azzam al-Ahmad said most ExComm members favor PLO-Hamas dialogue and Egypt may host these talks, but serious obstacles remain on interpretation of the Yemeni Initiative and the PLO's status. PLO Negotiations Affairs Chief Saeb Erekat told local press that he hopes that Hamas will "change its position, implement the Yemeni Initiative, and reverse the coup." In a June 5 meeting in Ramallah, Fatah PLC member Intisar al-Wazir led a group of 30 Fatah and independent PLC members in declaring support for President Abbas' call for dialogue and calling on Hamas to implement the Yemeni initiative. Former Hamas PM Ismayil Haniyah delivered a speech late June 5 asserting that Hamas is ready for immediate "comprehensive national dialogue based on the Sana'a Declaration," inviting the Arab League and unspecified Arab states to host talks. End summary.

PLO ExComm Moves Forward on Prep for "National Dialogue"

¶2. (C) On June 5, President Abbas' office announced that a committee of PLO ExComm members will take the lead on preparing for "comprehensive national dialogue with Hamas to implement the Yemeni Initiative." Fatah PLC bloc leader Azzam al-Ahmad told PLO FSN that most ExComm members favor Fatah-Hamas dialogue, but there are serious obstacles involving interpretation of the Yemeni Initiative and the PLO's status. Al-Ahmad said Hamas does not accept the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and refuses to agree to honor previous PLO commitments. He said Egypt will likely host initial PLO-Hamas talks if the factions adopt a common understanding of what the Yemeni Initiative entails. PFLP ExComm representative Abd al-Rahim Maluh told local press at a rally for Palestinian prisoners on June 5 that all PLO factions agree on the need for PLO-Hamas dialogue, and that prisoners fully support Abbas' efforts to "restore national unity."

Erekat: Hamas Must Implement Yemeni Initiative, "Reverse the Coup"

¶3. (SBU) In a June 5 press conference, PLO Negotiations Affairs Chief Saeb Erekat said he hopes that President Abbas' call for national dialogue "will be the key for Hamas to change its position, implement the Yemeni Initiative and refrain from manipulating its terms, and reverse the coup." Erekat noted that the Palestinian people made a strategic choice for peace, recognize international agreements and support a two-state solution.

PLC Reps Call on Hamas to Accept Abbas' Initiative

¶4. (SBU) In a June 5 meeting at the PLC hall in Ramallah, 30 Fatah and minor party representatives led by Fatah PLC member Intisar al-Wazir declared support for President Abbas' call for "comprehensive national dialogue" and called on Hamas to accept Abbas' invitation and implement the Yemeni initiative. Neither Hamas PLC members nor the Hamas-allied Deputy Speaker, Hassan Krayshah, attended the session. The PLC members urged all factions to support national unity and restore the PLC's role in PA government.

Hamas' Haniyah Welcomes Dialogue; Hamas Advisor Invites Abbas To Visit Gaza--Abbas Uninterested

¶5. (SBU) Former Hamas PM Haniyah gave a televised speech late June 5 asserting that Hamas is ready to start "comprehensive national dialogue based on the Sana'a Declaration." Haniyah invited the Arab League and unspecified Arab states to host PLO-Hamas dialogue, and asserted that USG policy is based on "supporting the

Zionists" and blocking Palestinian reconciliation efforts. Hamas advisor Ahmad Yusif spun President Abbas' June 4 speech as an offer for unconditional talks in comments to Gaza-based press, also inviting "an Arab and Islamic effort to support the dialogue and reconciliation endeavors." Yusif said he

hopes Abbas will visit the Gaza Strip in coming days. (Note: President Abbas' office reports no plans for a Gaza visit. Abbas believes Hamas had planned to assassinate him with a buried explosive charge in Gaza in spring 2007 and is unlikely to travel to Gaza at this time. End note).

WALLES